DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 361 152 RC 019 289

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TITLE	The Stoners: Drugs, Demons, and Delinquency. Garland Series, Cults and Nonconventional Religious Groups: A Collection of Outstanding Dissertations and Monographs.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8153-0771-3
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	268p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Garland Publishing, Inc., 717 Fifth Ave., Suite 2500, New York, NY 10022 ($80).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; *Delinquency; Demography; Educational Attainment; *Family Characteristics; *Hispanic Americans; *Juvenile Gangs; Religion; Secondary Education; Student Behavior; Subcultures; *Substance Abuse; Violence
IDENTIFIERS	*California (East Los Angeles); Magic; *Occultism; Satanism

ABSTRACT

Some adolescent Hispanic gang members in East Los Angeles call themselves Stoners, a reference to heavy illegal substance abuse. Stoners are distinguished from other gang members by their acquaintance with the occult sciences and Satanism. This book begins with a literature review covering traditional gangs and their subcultures in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the impact of conventional religion on delinquency, Satanism, and the occult sciences. An empirical description of the Stoners, including their demographics and their behavior, was developed by examining court records and conducting interviews with Stoners, traditional gang members, police, probation officers, social-service workers, and educators in Los Angeles County. Both Stoners and traditional gang members had mean family incomes below the poverty level, had parents with less than a ninth grade education, and came from Catholic backgrounds. Compared to traditional gang members, Stoners: (1) came from more mobile families; (2) had parents with significantly lower educational and employment levels; (3) attended school less often and had lower educational level and academic performance; (4) presented more disciplinary problems in school; and (5) were more likely to prefer heavy metal music. However, Stoners showed a wider dispersion on these variables than traditional gang members. Stoners were more violent and had less substance abuse arrests than traditional gang members, but were more likely to be under the influence at the time of arrest. This book contains approximately 170 references, an index, drawings, photographs, and a variable codebook. (SV)

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